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SMALL MIRACLES: CATHOLIC  
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF  
HAMILTON-WENTWORTH  
NEWSLETTER



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URBAN  
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# Small Miracles

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth Newsletter

## Tears and Laughter of fostering.

For the Pluims, it began Christmas 1984. A strong desire to share their good fortune with needy kids prompted Jack and Hazel, longtime Stoney Creek residents, to investigate fostering. Jack was a sales rep for Homelife State Realty and Hazel enjoyed her role as a homemaker, caring for their natural children, who are all now grown. "We both came from pretty rough backgrounds", recalls Hazel, "but we got it together." It was these early struggles that the Pluims believed would make them good candidates for fostering.

To date, more than twenty children have come through their front door. They vividly remember their first placement. "He was textbook", recalls Hazel, "but our worker was with us step by step." That first child remained in their home for four years.

People often think of fostering as a series of short-term placements. While some foster parents enjoy this method, others prefer long-term commitments with one or two children. Three of the Pluims' foster children have been part of the family for almost ten years and they eventually adopted a fourth child who had been placed with them at infancy. "Many children in our community will grow up in foster care" says Mary Anne Duncan, Recruitment Worker for the C.C.A.S. of Hamilton-Wentworth. "For these children, the stability of remaining in one foster home is ideal."



Fostering can mean sad times. "We've seen some heart breakers", says Jack. What makes the Pluims continue fostering? Jack and Hazel recognize that the rewards are many if you have realistic expectations for foster children. "Progress comes in tiny steps and the rewards are small ones. We had a couple of boys join us on vacation one year," recalls Jack. "When we watched their faces and realized they had never seen sand before, that was really something!"

"You experience triple the joy watching things through these children's eyes", adds Hazel. They define success as being able to establish warm, open relationships children can count on. "It's

Jack and Hazel Pluim at home with their foster child.

## Sandy's success story

Sandy first realized life was different for her at a very young age. The only child of first generation Europeans, Sandy's story is not your typical C.C.A.S. case. At the impressionable age of two, her parents split and she spent the next few years with her grandparents – an experience she describes as a "happy time" in her difficult life.

It is often difficult to put a name to cases of this type.

CONTINUES ON BACK SEE "HELP CREATE..."

CONTINUES ON BACK SEE "SANDY..."



## Inside This Issue

Message from  
the President

Angel Campaign

Summer Camp Program

Upcoming Events

Corporate Crusaders

Serendipity Auction

## **Message from the President**



Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, Small Miracles. At the C.C.A.S. we see miracles resulting every day from the dedicated, professional and caring efforts of our staff, foster and adoptive parents, volunteers, and our many community partners.

Small Miracles gives us a chance to inform the community of our work and to share our successes. For example, C.C.A.S. recently scored 92% for compliance with the Ministry standards regarding children who are permanent Crown Wards of C.C.A.S. We are very proud of the accomplishments of everyone at C.C.A.S. Enjoy Small Miracles and let us know if you have any comments.

*Mike McHugh*

# **Create a Caring World for Children with Pennies from Heaven**

While caseloads for social workers in child welfare and other social programs climb, the provincial government maintains its focus on transforming the role of government in an effort to reduce debt. This situation has presented critical challenges for children's aid societies in Ontario. Our agency has embarked on a strategic plan to reorganize services and diversify revenue. This will allow us to more effectively help those most in need, and maintain financial accountability. This strategy includes a fully integrated, comprehensive fundraising and communications plan to build a closer relationship between the C.C.A.S. and the community.

Our first Christmas Guardian Angel Appeal was mailed out in mid-November. Despite a three-week postal strike in the initial period of the campaign, over three hundred donors responded to our Guardian Angel letter raising over \$12,000 in support of programs that help to *Create a Caring World for Children*. A special tree was decorated with the returned angels in the lobby of our offices at 735 King Street East. It was truly a beautiful sight to behold. Thanks go to local branches of the Royal Bank who agreed to receive and forward donations to our offices during the strike. If you received a copy of our Guardian Angel Appeal and wish to make a contribution,

you can still help us meet our goal of \$25,000 by mailing in a cheque today or making a donation over the phone. Contact Robin Harber, Development Officer in charge of Annual Giving and Donor Relations at 905-525-2012 ext. 3240. Your gift will make a difference.

## **Summer Camp has a special meaning**



Summer Camp has a special meaning for children in care at the Catholic Children's Aid Society. It not only provides them with a happy, healthy summer experience in a safe, secure environment but it is a valuable tool in relationship building with both adults and peers. Most of all, it allows them to relax and have fun. To just be kids. Thanks to the Spectator Summer Camp Fund administered by the Hamilton Community Foundation and a \$5,000 grant from the Community Involvement Team at Levi Strauss Company, over 350 children and youth benefited from both residential and day camp experiences. Assistance to mount this program also came from Bell Mobility Foundation, Fortinos, National Tilden Rentals, Shoppers Drug Mart, Citizen Action Group, Cathedral High School, the Culture and Recreation Department and Human Resource Development Canada.

# Upcoming Events

## Annual General Meeting

Thursday, April 2nd, 1998 at 5:30 pm  
Hamilton & District Chamber of Commerce

## Third Annual Downtown Hamilton Restaurant Walking Tour

Saturday, May 23rd, 1998 at 11:00 am  
\$25 per person

## Eighth Annual Heather Barilla Memorial Rainbow Golf Classic

Thursday, June 25th, 1998 at 12:30 pm  
Beverly Golf and Country Club in  
Flamborough, Ontario  
\$175 per golfer

### For more information, contact

Lena Montecalvo, Development Officer of Special Events and Public Relations at (905) 525-2012, extension 3380.



Rose D'Antonio tries her luck at the Key Box draw, while volunteer David Ewer helps out.

# Serendipity Auction Exceeds Expectations

The Serendipity Auction, our premier fundraising event of the year, raised more than \$35,000 in its eighth annual year, held November 20th, 1997 at Carmen's Banquet Centre.

Thanks to our committed volunteers, ticket sales rocketed to well over four hundred. More than four hundred items were placed up for bid in live and silent auctions.

"Big ticket" items included a Sears snowblower worth almost \$1,200, a VIA Rail first-class return trip for two to Montreal, including accommodations at the luxurious Hotel du Parc, and an autographed Joe Montana football.

Chairperson, Carol Larsen, noted that the event gets bigger and better every year. "Each year, word gets around that our auction is a great evening where you are guaranteed to have a terrific

time. And there's no better cause than kids. It makes the hard work of our volunteers well worth the effort", says Larsen. Proceeds from the event support programs and services that assist children at risk and help to strengthen families.

Masters of Ceremony, the infamous Matt Hayes and Sunni Genesco of K-Lite's Sunni and Hayes morning show, do a stellar job of creating the hype and excitement necessary for fast and furious bidding. This, combined with our fast-talking auctioneer, Ron Coyne, results in many happy purchasers.

A new addition to the fundraising gala was the Key Box Draw. One key out of 150 was cut to open the lock to a box containing a gorgeous ladies diamond ring, valued at \$2,165 courtesy G.W. Thompson Jeweller of Hamilton.

# Corporate Crusaders

Hats off to our partners from the corporate community. Lex van't Hof presented the C.C.A.S. of Hamilton-Wentworth with a cheque for \$2,000 at our Annual Wine and Cheese Reception in December from monies raised through raffles held at Sescolite Lighting, located at 4175 Fairview Street in Burlington.

Sears Canada held a fundraiser, "Round Up For Kids" in October which netted over \$1,050 in support of the C.C.A.S. They also were a major donor to the Serendipity Auction by providing a Sears snowblower for the live auction.

Just this past month, Bank of Montreal donated 125 tickets to the prestigious Canadian Figure Skating Championships held at Copps Coliseum in Hamilton.

Our local Xerox sales representatives devoted many hours of packaging and delivery services to

our Children's Toy Drive at Christmas, thanks to support from their Manager, Al Varney.

Thanks as well to the many businesses that collected gifts and food on our behalf: Royal Bank Call Centre of Mississauga, Drake Personnel, Rotary Clubs – Hamilton East Wentworth and Stoney Creek, A.M., the Downtown Hamilton B.I.A. and the Nephrology Unit nursing staff at St. Joseph's Hospital.

### Corporate partnerships are important to us.

If your company would like to become involved with the C.C.A.S. through sponsorship or employee volunteerism, please call Margaret Gage, Manager of Development/ Public Relations at ext. 3315. Your support can make a difference in the lives of many children at risk.

# Help create a caring world for all children.

lonely being a foster child. They feel they don't belong to anyone", says Hazel.

The Pluims are one of approximately sixty-five full-time foster families with the C.C.A.S. of Hamilton-Wentworth. These homes, at full capacity, accommodate about 175 children. More homes are desperately needed.

The first step in fostering is to call the agency and attend a no-obligation foster parent information night. Those interested in pursuing fostering undergo an application process including references, home study, and training.

You don't have to be a parent, married, or at home full-time to foster young children. The Pluims say foster parents should be family-oriented, comfortable communicating with kids and agency professionals, and be willing to accept these children and their families

**Small Miracles** is a publication of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth. Your letters and comments are welcome. Please send correspondence to address below. If you would like information on foster or adoptive parenting, please contact Lori Giannetti, ext. 3241.

Catholic Children's Aid Society  
of Hamilton-Wentworth

DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPT.

735 King Street East  
Hamilton, Ontario L8M 1A1  
Telephone: (905) 525-2012  
Fax: (905) 525-5606



for who they are. "Use common sense and your own abilities and you'll be fine".

This formula has worked for the Pluims for over 13 years. "We put stability back in their lives", says Jack. "You can't ask for anything better."

For more information on fostering, call (905)525-2012 ext. 3241 or attend our Foster Parent Information Night on March 24th at 7pm and meet Jack and Hazel Pluim.



**Yes! I want to support** the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth and help children at risk.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my gift of:

Amount  Cheque  Visa  MasterCard  Amex

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your reply in the envelope provided. Charitable business #:10807-5920-RR0001

# Sandy is a symbol of determination....

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her only alternative and admits that the prospect of ending her life was an appealing thought, compared to the suffering she faced on a daily basis. Eventually, Sandy was placed in C.C.A.S. care.

As Sandy became more involved with her social workers, she expressed interest in working with other youth. Having struggled with feelings of loneliness and isolation, Sandy wanted to act as a mentor to children in similar situations. This prompted her to participate in our Summer Camp Program and to join the Youth In Care Committee. As well, Sandy's participation in the OACAS (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies) Youth In Care Program allowed her to address concerns on behalf of youth in care, and to advocate for the rights of foster children.

Today, at the age of twenty, Sandy is enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work program at an Ontario university. She plans to enter the social work field to further her dream of being an advocate for youth. Having won a number of bursaries and awards, Sandy is well on her way to a successful, secure adult life. Despite the obstacles of the past, Sandy has taken complete control of her destiny.

The C.C.A.S. of Hamilton-Wentworth is proud of Sandy's accomplishments and of her continued involvement in helping others. She has truly become a symbol of determination and hope for the rest of us.

*Note: Although the situation described above is real, some details have been changed for reasons of confidentiality.*

# Small Miracles

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth Newsletter

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## Volunteers Make Miracles Happen Every Day

What makes an everyday hero? At the Catholic Children's Aid Society, our heroes are our volunteers. They play an integral part in the delivery of programs and services. During 1997, volunteers contributed 16,567 hours of service, giving of their time and effort in a variety of ways that help make the future brighter for children at risk.

Our volunteers are ordinary people looking for extraordinary opportunities. They share their time and talents, they make new friends and they bring meaning and purpose to their own lives and to the lives of people they touch. They act as parent mentors, tutors and special friends. Volunteer drivers take children to and from appointments, supervised visits with their families, and other scheduled meetings.

Some of our volunteers support our special events by selling tickets, soliciting support, acting as greeters and promoting our cause. A volunteer board oversees the operation of the organization in partnership with the Executive Director and staff. Board members also become involved in special events and represent the C.C.A.S. in the community.

Who are these everyday heroes? They are men and women from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They are young and old, single or married, working or retired. Some are students,



some are homemakers. They all possess a commitment to share responsibility for the safety and well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of our community - children at risk.

They do all this and much more. Why? To change tears to laughter, to build trust where there was only fear, to give hope where there was only desperation, to make the future brighter and our community a better place to live. They receive no pay, and expect no thanks. They are our heroes and we salute them.

In this issue, we profile two of our everyday heroes, Norah Hickey

and Fiorella Mancuso - volunteers past and present. I hope that you will enjoy their stories. More important, I would like you to consider how you might give a few hours of your time on a regular basis to help us Create a more Caring World for our children. At a time when the demand for child welfare services is steadily increasing, volunteers will continue to be a vital component of our success. Call our volunteer coordinators, Helena Posner (ext. 3246) or Mary Hudecki (ext. 3245) at (905) 525-2012 to find out how you can become a volunteer - an everyday hero.

### Inside This Issue

- President's & Executive Director's Report
- Stephen Cowley Award
- Volunteer Profiles
- Upcoming Events
- Statistics for 1997
- Our Financials for 1997
- Who's Who at CCAS
- Friends of the CCAS



# Year in review - a team effort!

President's and Executive Director's Report

Although some Annual Reports have separate messages by the President and the Executive Director, this year we thought we would combine them. In some ways, this is a reflection of the strong partnership that has existed between us over the three years that this "team" has been together. We have both enjoyed the experience and we hope others have noticed the benefits that have derived from such a good working relationship.

On the Board of Directors side, we are pleased to report many positive activities over the past year. In our quest to ensure the

membership at the Annual Meeting, for approval. The Board has been functioning for some time without Standing Committees and there are no such committees in the new Bylaw.

We have been an active participant in the Council of Catholic Service Organizations, a local group chaired by Bishop Anthony Tonnos. The Council is a forum, which allows us to express and strengthen our Catholic heritage and our ties with other Catholic agencies in our community.

On the "operational side", staff have had a very successful year as evidenced by external reviews. Once again, the Ministry of Community and Social Services review of our services to Crown Wards in C.C.A.S. care was very complimentary. Despite the high level of need identified in these children, our Society continues to exceed the provincial average in terms of compliance with government standards. Late in the year, the Ministry "Child Protection File Review" assessed our record in meeting child abuse investigation standards. The formal report has not been released but by examining the "raw data", we are sure of a success rating in the high nineties!

Our case statistics show significant volume increases in child abuse and other investigations, open cases and admissions to C.C.A.S. care. Our staff have been hard pressed to keep up with the case work, and the associated paper work as well as a number of system changes in our field. We have had to increase staffing and institute several "Team Leader" positions, in order to meet these rising requirements.

The Board has used ad hoc committees to study a number of issues and to create new policy statements. The areas of Board Member orientation and development, C.C.A.S. collaboration with other agencies and financial monitoring have all received this kind of attention. The Board has just approved a new corporate Bylaw, which will be taken to our mem-

based on the results of this research, we have set in motion a number of changes, which will take effect in 1998. These include a change in our Intake Services, the development of a new "short term services unit" and other program changes. We expect to see other changes in the future, which will be based on analysis of aggregate information on client strengths and needs. Our work will include more frequent assessments of risk to children and quicker response in longer term, chronic cases where children may be suffering from the long-term impact of neglect. Our staff deserve much recognition for their conscientious participation in this process as while this is happening, the work must still go on!

We continue to expand our efforts in public relations and fundraising. C.C.A.S.' profile in the community continues to rise, and our special events such as the Annual Hamilton Restaurant Tour, the Heather Barilla Memorial Rainbow Golf Classic and the Serendipity Auction all have increased in scope and profit! You will see a much more "public profile" in 1998 with each edition of our new newsletter, "Small Miracles", as we present some positive stories about our work in local media.

No such report would be complete without thanks to the large number of individuals who contribute to the work of the Society. On behalf of our colleagues on the Board of Directors, we would like to express sincere appreciation to the large number of staff, foster and adoptive parents, volunteers and government and private donors, who have made the success of this year possible. Together we can create a

caring world for children!

On a final note - just from the President - a special thank you to all Board Members,

Mark Ewer and the C.C.A.S.

staff. You have enlightened me and provided the encouragement and support necessary to ensure that my three years as President always made me proud!



*Mark Ewer,  
Executive Director*

## Stephen Cowley's Circle of Friends.

In 1997, we lost a board member, colleague and friend in Stephen John Cowley. Only fifty years old, Steve died while living out one of his passions, running. Steve had a spiritual side that benefited all of us as we discussed and refined the agency's Mission and Value statements. In his honour, we have established the Steve Cowley's Circle of Friends Award.

This year's award will be presented to Mr. Patrick McInnes, a C.C.A.S. social worker since 1980. All of his adult life, Pat has displayed a special caring for the handicapped, and those who care for them. Pat operates our Alternate Care Program with the commitment and kindness that our Mission calls for, making him a fitting recipient for this year's award. Pat will receive his award at the April 2, 1998 Annual Meeting.



*Mike McHugh,  
President*

areas. We are still in the process of implementing this system, but it promises to keep the Board on top of key issues and able to fulfil its governance responsibilities. We have continued our process of evaluating each Board Meeting and also evaluating our work at the end of the board year. The results of these efforts are apparent, as we consider the year in review.

The Board has used ad hoc committees to study a number of issues and to create new policy statements. The areas of Board Member orientation and development, C.C.A.S. collaboration with other agencies and financial monitoring have all received this kind of attention. The Board has just approved a new corporate Bylaw, which will be taken to our mem-

# Our Financials

## STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENDITURES AND BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)

Year Ended December 31, 1997

	1997	1996
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grants		
Province of Ontario	\$ 5,992,147	\$ 5,381,594
Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth	1,488,191	1,324,698
Alternative to Care Grant	100,920	88,884
Family Benefits	133,860	129,115
Donations and Fundraising Events	120,184	83,250
Maintenance from parents	7,264	14,063
Memberships	749	690
Miscellaneous income	9,723	3,710
Other Children's Aid Societies - maintenance	5,503	8,862
Preparation for Independence Grant	66,200	66,243
	<b>\$7,924,741</b>	<b>\$7,101,109</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Administrative	\$ 227,469	\$ 180,138
Alternative to Care	102,070	88,884
Boarding Rate Payments	1,577,193	1,242,333
Building occupancy	178,747	272,953
Capital and non-recurring	58,736	50,691
Client's personal needs	240,687	191,892
Employee benefits	604,983	573,551
Public Relations and Fundraising	93,554	23,299
Group Home Payments	360,858	390,090
GST Paid	39,446	21,301
Miscellaneous	29,089	43,669
Outside institutions	545,669	506,958
Preparation for Independence Program	66,234	66,243
Preventive services	49,341	45,473
Professional fees	178,643	113,608
Promotion and publicity	27,756	30,690
Staff salaries	3,165,724	2,977,425
Staff training	33,304	32,882
Travel	214,148	182,170
	<b>\$ 7,793,651</b>	<b>\$ 7,034,250</b>
Excess of revenue over expenditures before amortization	\$131,090	\$66,859
Less: Amortization	220,834	95,615
<b>EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(-\$89,744)</b>	<b>(-\$28,756)</b>
<b>Accumulated deficit, beginning of year</b>	<b>(\$1,240,218)</b>	<b>(\$1,211,462)</b>
<b>Accumulated deficit, end of year</b>	<b>(\$1,329,962)</b>	<b>(-\$1,240,218)</b>

The complete audited statements are available from the C.C.A.S. office.



Norah Hickey

## Our fairy godmother.

### A Volunteer's Profile

Norah Hickey is Godmother to more babies than she can count.

At one time, she was picking up as many as two newborn babies a week from local hospitals. That was in the late '60s and early '70s.

One of Norah's first jobs as a volunteer was to ensure that babies given up for adoption were baptized prior to being placed in foster care.

Her first time was emotionally draining. "During the baptism, I looked down at this little baby and thought, 'you don't even know me; I'm a total stranger to you.' I cried after I got home that night."

Over the years, Norah has volunteered for St. Martin's Manor, St. Joseph's Hospital, and has served as the President of the Catholic Women's League of St. Margaret Mary Church. She has coached girl's basketball and softball, organized variety shows and

dances, and taught cooking and crafts. She has even played a part in the publication of a fundraising cookbook.

Now, as an Executive Assistant at the C.C.A.S. of Hamilton-Wentworth, Norah's role has changed, but her philosophy has not. "When you volunteer, you get so much more out of it than you put in. I have made lifetime friends that my husband and I still vacation with, and my children now volunteer in the community. My father was always doing for others - so I guess you could say it's in my blood."

If it's true that you reap more than you sow by volunteering, then Norah is rich in many ways. By making volunteer work a priority in her life, she has enriched many lives and has become a terrific role model in our community.

## Fiorella creates a caring world.

Fiorella Mancuso is in the business of generating smiles.

For the past eight years, Fiorella Mancuso, a young, energetic and cheerful individual, has made the futures of many children a little brighter. As a Program Coordinator of the C.C.A.S Tutor Program, Fiorella devotes her Tuesday evenings to helping children with their school studies.

"The children never cease to amaze me with their outlook, in spite of the difficulties they face. They look forward to coming to tutoring once a week, and that is an experience I wouldn't trade for anything". Although the rewards are great for both Fiorella and those she helps, there are challenging moments as well.

"As a volunteer, I have had to accept that some children are very troubled and come from disturbing homes," says Fiorella. "I come from a good family life, and seeing these children makes me realize how much we take for

Fiorella Mancuso

granted. It is unfortunate that these innocent kids have been cheated of a happy childhood."

It is obvious that Fiorella truly enjoys her role in the Tutor Program and does not view her job as work. She states that a good volunteer is caring, considerate and sincere, and stresses that the involvement of volunteers is very important to these children. "If you're thinking about volunteering, you need to remember that the kids depend on you. If you are not committed to the time required, you aren't being fair to them."

For some children, the only constants in their lives are the programs and services provided by the C.C.A.S. By working with these children, Fiorella provides them with much more than tutoring. She demonstrates commitment, responsibility, and most important - unconditional love. She sets an example which will have a lifetime impact on the children she serves.



# Upcoming Events

## Third Annual Hamilton Restaurant Tour

Saturday, May 23rd, 1998 at 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. \$25 per person.

## Heather Barilla Memorial Rainbow Golf Classic

Thursday, June 25th, 1998 at the Beverly Golf and Country Club in Flamborough, Ontario. \$175 per golfer.

## Volunteer Recognition '98

Thursday, June 11th, 1998 at the Hillcrest Restaurant. Time to be announced.

## For more information

Please contact Lena Montecalvo, Development Officer of Special Events and Public Relations at (905) 525-2012, extension 3380.

# Statistical Information for 1997

	1997	1996
<b>Intake Requests</b>		
Requests Received	3379	3,086
Child Abuse Investigations	339	305
Other Cases Opened	1358	1,346
Total Cases Opened	1697	1,651
<b>Child and Family Protection Services</b>		
Families Served (including Intake)	2221	2,121
Admissions to Care	111	96
Children in Care Served	291	272
Days Care for Children	64,669	62,139
<b>Resources Services</b>		
Foster Homes Served	168	156
Foster Applications	36	31
Foster Enquiries	106	42
<b>Alternate Care Program</b>		
Children Served	28	25
Children on Waiting List	5	7
Families Available/In Use	20	22
<b>Adoption Services</b>		
Children on Adoption Probation	23	17
Adoptions Completed	9	7
Adoption Applications	120	50
Adoption Enquiries	212	220
<b>Adoption and Record Disclosure</b>		
Requests Received	156	142
Requests Completed	111	159
Reunions	11	11
<b>Young Parent Services</b>		
Cases Served	26	35
<b>Volunteer Services</b>		
Approved Volunteers	116	173
Hours of Service Provided	16,567	14,157
Kilometers Driven	219,374	179,035
<b>Other Programs</b>		
Children's Assessment and Treatment	42	38
Therapeutic Recreation	206	180
Preparation for Independence	65	60
Summer Campers	107	55
Youth in Transition (HRDC initiative)	12	0



# Who's Who at CCAS.

## Board of Directors

Michael J. McHugh, *President*  
Verdi Gough, *1st Vice President*  
John Bruno, *2nd Vice President*  
Robert Wade, *Treasurer*  
Florina Castura, *Secretary*  
Patrick Wilson, *Past President*  
John Anker  
Patricia Budd  
Michael Cruse  
Frank D'Amico<sup>\*</sup>  
Myron Karp  
Ken Kilpatrick<sup>\*\*</sup>  
Michael Lamontagne  
Peder Larsen  
David McPherson  
Frank McIntyre<sup>\*</sup>  
Bernie Morelli<sup>\*</sup>  
Irene Stayshyn  
Stephen Stinson (Reverend)  
Marnie Weber  
Cathy Wellwood  
<sup>\*</sup>regional representation  
<sup>\*\*</sup>resigned during the year

## Ladies' Auxiliary

Mary Markey, *President*  
Ann McDonald, *Past President*  
Helen Licatta, *Treasurer*  
Shirley Sullivan, *Secretary*

**Small Miracles** is a publication of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth. Your letters and comments are welcome. Please send correspondence to address below.

## Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth

DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPT.  
735 King Street East  
Hamilton, Ontario L8M 1A1  
Telephone: (905) 525-2012  
Fax: (905) 525-5606



## Foster Parent Association Executive

John Anker, *President*  
Joanne Dippel, *1st Vice President*  
Kim Cabral, *2nd Vice President*  
Rita Mooney O'Connor,  
*Past President*  
Brenda Cantwell, *Treasurer*  
Maureen Walsh, *Secretary*  
Shirley Richardson, *Telephone Convenor*  
Lewine Anker, *Social Convenor*  
Steven Walsh, *Social Convenor*  
Heather Gardner, *Staff Liaison*  
Rosemary Zietsma, *Staff Liaison*  
Maria Cerasoli, *Communications Chairperson*



**Helena Posner**, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, is responsible for recruiting, screening, training, and placement of new volunteers as well as the supervision of ongoing volunteers. Helena is also the coordinator of the agency's tutoring and parenting programs.



**Mary Hudecki**, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, organizes close to two hundred drives each week for children in foster care. Without this vital service, our children could not access the many programs, services and family visits that mean so much to them.

## \$100-\$199

Elizabeth Burke  
Canadian Martyrs CWL  
Anthony Claessens  
Alan Duncan  
Brian Duxbury  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Fazari  
Walter Godin  
Robin Harber  
Mary Hawes  
Ed & Norah Hickey  
Cecile M. Hoek  
Claire Hopkins  
Frances Hurley  
Mary Anne Jelen  
John & Katie Justisc  
Terry & Donna Keleher  
Dean & Betty Kenney  
Robert Light  
Mary Markey  
David McPherson  
Michael Michalski  
Michael & Anne O'Neill  
Sharron Orovan  
Mardi Peckham  
John Pederson  
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Thomas J. Rocchi  
Claudio Rocci  
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St. Augustine's CWL  
United Way of Toronto  
Herman & Theresa Wilson

## \$200-\$499

Dr. & Mrs. Ian Brockhouse  
Catholic Single Adults  
C.C.A.S. Ladies Auxiliary  
Corpus Christi School  
Margaret Gage  
Heather Gardner  
Rose Marie Kemp  
Beatrice Kemp  
Knights of Columbus  
Peder & Carol Larsen  
London Life Share Committee  
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Issue 3 June/98

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# Small Miracles

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth Newsletter

## Living Messages

Over the past year, the child protection system of Ontario has operated under intense public scrutiny and criticism. For those who work in children's aid societies, this has sometimes been viewed as unfair and demoralizing. Subsequent to the six inquests into deaths of children known to children's aid societies and publication of Ontario Child Mortality Task Force recommendations, the Ministry of Community and Social Services is implementing a series of reforms designed to restructure child welfare, on a scale unprecedented since the late seventies.

Government initiatives currently underway such as a standardized risk assessment and eligibility tools, an interactive child welfare database network and proposed revisions to legislation are meant to strengthen and improve the ability of agencies to respond to an increasingly complex and heavy caseload. The challenge for children's aid societies is to meet the established deadlines for implementation of these initiatives while continuing to manage services where financial and human resources have not kept pace with demand.

The impact of this situation has sometimes caused child protection workers to operate in crisis mode. Frontline staff are more stressed and anxious about their capacity to manage cases. According to recent statistics published by the Ontario

Association of Children's Aid Societies, there has been a 13% increase in the number of cases open to protection, an 8% increase in the number of children in care over the past year, and a corresponding increase in court applications. Staff vacancies are becoming harder to fill. Social work graduates are reluctant to enter child welfare as a result of negative publicity.

Despite the present crisis in public confidence, our frontline workers remain committed to their role in "creating a more caring world for children". The staff at CCAS provide leadership in innovative programs that respond to families in crisis and improve the life prospects for children at risk. But they cannot do it alone. The responsibility for protecting our children is one that must be shared by the entire community. Together we must ensure an even playing field for all children regardless of their circumstances, which will allow them to reach their full potential.

What can you do? Become a foster parent, volunteer or make a gift to support the very important work of The Catholic

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Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth. Encourage your church, service clubs and community groups to support causes that protect children and improve their life prospects. Finally, report circumstances where you believe children may be in need of protection. In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Neil Postman says, "Children are the living messages we send, to a time we will not see." What message will you help send?

## **Message from the Executive Director and President**

**Staff: a Crucial Component at CCAS!**



**Mark Ewer**  
Executive Director



**Verdi Gough**  
President

CCAS's fiscal year starts April 1, along with new appointments to the Board of Directors. A favourite part of each board meeting is the staff presentation on some aspect of Society services or operation. This serves as an orientation for board members as they seek to understand the complexities of child protection. The Board often receives reports or other information that serves an accountability purpose, as their governance role requires.

Board members are always impressed by the depth of knowledge, commitment and caring shown by CCAS staff. They recognize that work of such importance and intensity requires a team approach, throughout the organization. If positive results are to be achieved through the efforts of staff, the process must start with the support of an enthusiastic board.

Their work is often difficult but we are confident of our staff "on the front lines". We want CCAS staff to know that we are behind them all the way!

# **Marden Hewitt has "been there" in more ways than one**

As one of two supervisors in the Intake Unit at CCAS, Marden knows first hand the stress endured daily by her staff members. She has worked in a variety of supervisory and front line positions in the agency. It all began with a student placement while enrolled in the social work degree program at McMaster University thirteen years ago.

The Intake Unit is responsible for the first step involved in assessing the protection needs of a child. In consultation with the social worker, Marden reviews the initial assessment to ensure that all the required and appropriate responses have been considered. Once this has been done, action is taken that is in the best interests of the child and which identifies their special needs. Helping staff to prioritize and manage their time effectively is crucial. Marden acts as a consultant to staff by providing the education and support necessary in carrying out child protection duties.

Marden says a key element to the success of the Intake Unit is a mutually supportive staff team. Apprehending abused children, unpredictable home visits and

endless paperwork can take its toll. "You have to know that you can rely on each other during those difficult days." This is the position she adopts as a manager, making herself available to others to provide encouragement or give advice. "I know the signs," she says. When a member of her staff is looking fatigued or making comments not usually heard, Marden knows it's time to reach out.

Marden maintains that to survive in child welfare, you must be realistic. Her own front-line experience has enabled her to set achievable goals for her own staff and to make their personal safety a priority. Advocating regularly as a public speaker to community groups on the prevention of child abuse and the need for family supports, Marden is recognized as an expert on child welfare.

As well, Marden can identify with some of the children who come through her unit. Having lost her mother at the age of eight, she became self-reliant



**Marden Hewitt**

early in life. Working life on a Nova Scotia farm, combined with her experience as a camp counsellor has enabled Marden to develop an empathy for children and a common-sense approach to child welfare.

Giving of herself in so many ways throughout her life has provided many others with the encouragement and support they might not have received otherwise.

# CCAS Events

## Volunteer Recognition Evening

Thursday, June 11, 1998.

The Hillcrest Restaurant

510 Concession Street,

Hamilton, Ontario

5:30 p.m.

Contact Helena Posner at  
(905)525-2012, ext. 3246

## Heather Barilla Memorial Rainbow Golf Classic

Thursday, June 25, 1998

Beverly Golf and Country Club

Flamborough, Ontario

12:30 shotgun start

\$175 per golfer

Contact Lena Montecalvo at  
(905)525-2012, ext. 3380

## Foster Parent Recognition Dinner

Friday, October 23, 1998

The Hillcrest Restaurant

510 Concession Street,

Hamilton, Ontario

5:30 p.m.

Contact Lillian Palamarchuk at  
(905)525-2012, ext. 3247

## The Serendipity Auction

Thursday, November 26, 1998

Carmen's Banquet Centre

1520 Stonechurch Road East

Hamilton, Ontario

\$25 per person

Contact Lena Montecalvo at  
(905)525-2012, ext. 3380



## Glimmers of Hope

"These are my kids," she says, beaming with pride as if they are her own. Seeing the collage of photos on her desk, it is obvious that Laurie Gorchinsky has a strong personal investment in the children whose faces grace her office. After twelve years as a Children's Services Worker with the CCAS of Hamilton-Wentworth, Laurie has become close to a multitude of children.

She says she never really planned to pursue social work. A strong family background provided her with "a great childhood", and the security and self-confidence to succeed. An aptitude test in high school directed her to a career in social work, and although she grew up with foster children in her own home, she didn't make the connection between being a member of a foster family and possessing the skills necessary for social work until much later.

The nature of Laurie's job in Children's Services means that Laurie has the benefit of seeing the results of her efforts, whether they be re-integration into the home, the positive results of counselling, or simply seeing the

child grow into a secure adult. But she is quick to point out that "happy endings" – cases in which the child eventually flourishes – are few. "The rewards can be great," she says, "but for many of our kids in care, the emotional damage is already done." The truth of her statement emphasizes the importance of social workers in today's society.

When asked about media coverage of late on child welfare and the role of the social worker, Laurie's frustration shows. She is tired of the negative portrayal of social workers. Rarely does the public hear about the hours worked, the endless number of court proceedings, and the difficulty of bringing together the many people who surround the life of one child: caregivers, teachers, counsellors, doctors.

All in all, Laurie approaches each case with optimism and an open mind. In order to care for others, she believes you need to



Laurie Gorchinsky

take care of yourself. A sense of humour helps, as do long walks during her lunch hour. She doesn't take her work home and family life is a priority.

Glancing down at her photos, Laurie warms up at the sight of two particular little girls who are now doing incredibly well. It's those glimmers of hope that keep her going, along with the satisfaction of knowing she has made a difference.

# Bon Appetit

The results of the Third Annual Hamilton Restaurant Tour are in! Over \$12,000 was raised in support of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth on Saturday, May 23rd, 1998.

Restaurants in downtown Hamilton and their sponsoring wineries and breweries were visited by 600 enthusiastic tour participants on a beautiful, sunny and warm spring day. Many positive comments regarding the quality of food and drink, along with compliments about the friendliness and professionalism of our tour guides have been received.

Hats off to the culinary genius of the following restaurants, wineries and breweries who donated their fare and opened the doors to our tour participants:

Fran's  
L.A. Bats Eatery and Sports Bar  
La Cantina  
La Costa  
Last Minute Larry's  
La Piazza Allegra  
Liaison College of Culinary Arts  
LionsHead  
Manhattan Downtown  
Montfort's Restaurant  
Stardust  
Sundried Tomatoes

Tailgate Charlie's  
The Rude Native  
Winking Judge  
Colio Estate Wines  
Brick Brewing Co.  
Henry of Pelham  
Upper Canada Brewery  
Molson's  
Willow Heights Winery  
Guinness  
Sleeman Brewery  
Peller Estates  
Hillebrand Estates  
Konzelmann Winery  
Wood's End Wines

Special thanks to the Royal Connaught - Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel for donating the use of the Bayshore Room for guest registration.

Funds raised from the Restaurant Tour will establish a bursary fund for children in C.C.A.S. care who wish to pursue post-secondary education.



## Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth

DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPT.  
735 King Street East  
Hamilton, Ontario L8M 1A1  
Telephone: (905) 525-2012  
Fax: (905) 525-5606



# Hamilton Community Foundation Funds YIT

On February 11th of this year, we received word that the Hamilton Community Foundation selected the CCAS as the recipient of a \$6,000 grant to support the part-time component of the Youth In Transition Program, which runs from May to September.

The Y.I.T. Program, established in 1997, was developed to address the need for pre-employment training for youth receiving services by the CCAS. The development of positive work attitudes, social skills, private sector contacts and a sense of self-worth all contribute to future opportunities for youth that are considered "disadvantaged".

"Through our grant making programs, the Hamilton Community Foundation strives to strengthen the community's capacity to care for itself...and we believe that this process can begin with our young people," said Sylvia Kajiura, Chair of the Foundation's Grant Committee.

In addition to addressing a critical community need, YIT helps to prevent unemployment and poverty. Bridging the gap between disadvantaged youth and the business community, as well as enriching opportunities for our

youth were all viewed as valuable program characteristics by the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Youth enrolled in the program learn a variety of skills starting with job searching, resume writing, and interview preparation. The second stage involves a job placement, matching up a business with a youth expressing interest in that particular area of employment. Businesses accepted into the Youth In Transition program must demonstrate commitment to ensure the training needs of the youth are being met.

Stephanie Huxley and Deanna McArthur, facilitators of the Youth In Transition program report great success following the completion of the full-time program's first year. Besides picking up essential skills and experience in job searching, it was apparent that a "ripple effect" was taking place. For many of the participating youth, there were marked improvements in self-esteem, living conditions and in family and peer relationships.

For more information on the Youth In Transition Program, call (905) 525-2012, ext. 3222 or 3221.

**Yes! I want to support** the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth and help children at risk.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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